DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 324 024 IR 053 302

AUTHOR Kenney, Lawrence M.
TITLE Collaborative Efforts of Librarians and Teachers Could Impact Literacy.
PUB DATE 90
NOTE 9p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Technology; *Federal Programs; Information Seeking; *Librarians; Library Role; *Library Services; Library Skills; *Literacy; *Professional Development; *Social Action; State Libraries; State Programs
IDENTIFIERS Teacher Librarian Relationship; *White House Conference Library Info Services

ABSTRACT

This paper urges teachers and librarians to join hands and make their voices heard prior to the convening of the White House Conference on Library and Information Services (WHCLIS) in July 1991. Issues librarians should consider include how libraries can more effectively support formal literacy education; assist greater numbers of learners and their volunteer tutors; help people whose primary language is not English; cooperate with other agencies in community information and referral; use new technologies to serve learners; help people develop coping skills; extend literacy and other services to minorities, to people in penal institutions, and to rural populations; and mobilize community, state, and federal action in behalf of literacy. To this end, librarians can: (1) contact their state library to determine whether the state is holding a pre-WHCLIS conference; (2) secure the names of individuals responsible for WHCLIS planning; (3) apprise the president of the state library association and of the International Reading Association of an interest in literacy and willingness to provide input to WHCLIS pre-conferences; and (4) sponsor speakers representing the various WHCLIS program teams at schools, churches, libraries, professional organizations, and clubs. (4 references) (SD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED324024

Collaborative Efforts of Librarians and Teachers Could Impact Literacy

The historic White House Conference on Library and Information Services in 1979 brought together over 900 delegates representing more than 100,000 people who had participated in pre-conferences in the states, territories and the District of Columbia. The 64 resolutions approved recommended changes and improvements in various aspects of Library and Information Services. Among major results were increased public awareness, the formation of an office of libraries in the U.S. Office of Education, increased federal funding, the creation of WHCLIST (White House Conference on Library and Information Services Taskforce) and expanded state and local support.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Lawrence M.Kenney
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

In July 1991, the U.S. will hold its second White House Conference in Library and Information Services. The Conference will have a wide range of Americans as delegates: library users, trustees, Friends' groups, civic leaders, lawmakers, librarians, information providers and citizens at large. These delegates will focus on the needs of libraries and develop recommendations for future library and information services.

Three themes have been established for the upcoming Conference: Library and Information Services for Productivity, for Literacy and for Democracy.

IR053302

For teachers and librarians, the issues to be considered under the theme of literacy are of grave importance: These are how libraries can:

more effectively support formal education for literacy;

assist greater numbers of self-learners and their volunteer tutors;

help persons whose primary language is not English;

cooperate with other agencies in community information and referral;

use new technologies to serve learners;

help people develop coping skills;

best extend literacy and other services to people in rural areas;

support and expand literacy and other services to minorities;

become effective partners and advocates in mobilizing community, state and federal action in behalf of literacy;

help newly literate people expand their educational, cultural and international horizons;

best use limited federal funds under LSCA Titles V and VI, and cooperate with other federal literacy programs;

support training and education programs in penal institutions;

strengthen and develop children's services and parent education programs that will help develop a new generation of life-long learners;

support life-long learning for people of all ages, conditions and abilities;

improve services through cooperation with the private sector;

promote the recognition that the ability to find and use the information is a fundamental skill; and,

provide opportunities for students to develop the ability to find and use information.

(White House Conference 1985).

Fifty-eight million Americans over the age of 18 have difficulties reading for everyday survival, ranking America 49th in literacy among the 159 countries of the world. Illiterates represent a lost resource in human potential and in tax dollars - - both not realized income as well as dollars spent on welfare, prison, remedial education and incompetent job performance. Total spending on illiteracy in the United States reaches only about 4 percent of those who need help. The National Agency Council on Adult Education estimates that five billion dollars would be needed to impact the illiteracy problem through educational coursework - - money that is not here and quite likely not to be.

Libraries are playing a vital role in curbing illiteracy and in halting it. Our libraries supply materials for adult learners and for other special users, sponsor literacy programs and cooperate with individuals and agencies that do. In many libraries, physical space is devoted to tutoring programs, children's programs and to media centers. Materials are made available to teachers/tutors and special users such as the visually-impaired, adult learner, and bilingual. In 1984, the U.S. Department of Education report, Alliance for Excellence, called on "libraries to become active in adult literacy education programs

at local, state, and national levels." (Alliance for Excellence, 1984).

In the joint venture to eradicate illiteracy and to teach youth and adults the necessary survival skills and life-long skills, teachers and librarians must join hands and make their voices heard at the local, regional, state and association / organization levels now, prior to the convening of the White House Conference on Library and Information Services. Librarians and teachers should begin to assemble their input, particularly for the more than 50 pre-White House conferences being held during 1990 by the states and territories prior to the White House Conference scheduled for July 1991:

1. Contact the state or chief librarian of your state / territory to determine whether your region is planning to hold a pre-White House Conference.

2. Secure the name or names of individuals responsible for the White House planning activities in your locale from your state or chief librarian.

3. Apprise the president of your state library association of your interest in literacy and of your willingness to provide input in the pre-planning.

4. Inform the president of the state council of the International Reading Association of your interest in literacy and in the pre-planning activities of the White House Conference. Local council presidents could convey sentiments of its members to the presidents of state councils.

5. Sponsor speakers representing the various White House Conference program teams at your school, church, library, organization or club. Local IRA leaders and members of "Friends of the Library", a group now functioning in more than 30 states, would be excellent sources of assistance.

6. Make your wishes about literacy change and improvement known to the leadership of your professional organizations and associations, many of which will have program team membership for Conference planning. These include such groups as the American Library Association, American Federation of Teachers, International Reading Association, and the National School Boards Association User groups to be considered are the Girl Scouts of America, The Boy Scouts, and

the League of Women Voters of the United States. You may want to ascertain whether your membership organizations have been invited to participate in task-force planning activities.

Literacy is everybody's business. Library and information services are important to each one, too. It is time for teachers and librarians to exercise leadership, hopefully together, in reviewing needs for services, evaluating services, and planning how library and information services can serve them through this knowledge explosion in the "information society".

References

Alliance for Excellence: Librarians Response to a Nation at Risk (1984). Washington D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office.

Kenney, L.M. (1981). White House Conference on Libraries and Information Services. Journal of Reading. 24. 719-721.

Venezky, Richard L., Wagner, Daniel A., Ciliberti, & Ciliberti, Barrie S. (Eds.) (1990). International Reading Association.

White House Conference Preliminary Design Group. (1985). Toward the 1989 White House Conference on Library and Information Services. Washington, D.C.: National Commission on Libraries and Information Services.